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**Auburn auto dealer charged with felony theft of sales tax and filing false tax returns**

**SEATTLE, Wash.,** Sept. 28, 2004—The owner of the now-closed Frank's Integrity Motors in Auburn was charged this week with stealing \$193,431 in sales tax collected on 142 vehicles he sold between 2001 and 2003.

The Washington State Attorney General's Criminal Justice Division charged Frank J. Petschl, 61, of Milton with two counts of first degree theft of sales tax trust funds and one count of filing fraudulent tax returns in an attempt to cover up the theft. The case was filed in King County Superior Court at the request of the Washington State Department of Revenue.

Petschl is scheduled to be arraigned at 10 a.m. Oct. 5.

The maximum penalty for first-degree theft is 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine; the maximum penalty for filing a false or fraudulent tax return is 5 years and a \$10,000 fine.

According to the charging papers, Petschl understated his anticipated volume of business when he applied for a business license, claimed that he only would be selling vehicles wholesale, failed to file annual tax returns until contacted by the Department, and then filed returns that omitted his vehicle sales.

Petschl's alleged deception unraveled when the Department discovered that he had been selling vehicles retail, and a subsequent audit revealed the extent of his thefts.

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